

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An automatic brake system for a vehicle comprising:
a forward-monitoring unit that automatically detects an obstacle preceding the vehicle;
and

a control unit that varies ~~an assumed steering characteristic of the vehicle dependent on manual steering operation~~ an assumed characteristic of manual steering operation in accordance with a condition of a path where the vehicle is traveling and executes an automatic braking control operation to avoid a potential collision with the obstacle, based on the ~~assumed steering characteristic~~ assumed manual steering operation characteristic.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 1, wherein:
the control unit comprises:

a steering characteristic determining unit that determines the assumed manual steering operation characteristic;

a steering-based ~~steering-based~~ avoidance determining unit that determines a possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, passing on either side of left and right sides of the obstacle, based on the assumed manual steering operation characteristic determined by the steering characteristic determining unit;

a brake-based avoidance determining unit that determines a possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by braking; and

an automatic brake control determining unit that executes the automatic braking control operation to avoid the potential collision with the obstacle, based on the possibility determined by the steering-based avoidance determining unit and the possibility determined by the brake-based avoidance determining unit.

5. (Original) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 4, wherein:

the control unit further comprises an avoidance space width detecting unit that detects widths of spaces on the sides of the obstacle; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the widths of the spaces on the sides of the obstacle.

6. (Original) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 5, wherein:

the control unit further comprises a steering-based avoidance easiness determining unit that determines a degree of easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the widths of the spaces on the sides of the obstacle and a width of the vehicle; and the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the degree of easiness.

7. (Previously Presented) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 4, wherein:

the control unit further comprises a lateral displacement calculating unit that determines a lateral displacement required for a steering-based collision avoidance to each of the sides of the obstacle, based on the condition of the path where the vehicle is traveling detected by the forward-monitoring unit; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the lateral displacements determined by the lateral displacement calculating unit.

8. (Previously Presented) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 7, wherein:

the control unit further comprises:

an avoidance space width detecting unit that detects widths of spaces on the sides of the obstacle; and

a steering-based avoidance easiness determining unit that determines a degree of easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the widths of the spaces on the sides of the obstacle and a width of the vehicle;

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the degree of

easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering determined by the steering-based avoidance easiness determining unit; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the lateral displacements determined by the lateral displacement calculating unit, only when the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering determined by the steering-based avoidance determining unit is positive for both sides of the obstacle.

9. (Previously Presented) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 8, wherein:

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, only for a side of the obstacle where the lateral displacement determined by the lateral displacement calculating unit is smaller than on another side.

10. (Currently Amended) An automatic brake system for a vehicle comprising:

forward-monitoring means for automatically detecting an obstacle preceding the vehicle; and

control means for varying ~~an assumed steering characteristic of the vehicle dependent on manual steering operation~~ an assumed characteristic of manual steering operation in accordance with a condition of a path where the vehicle is traveling and executing an automatic braking control operation to avoid a potential collision with the obstacle, based on the assumed manual steering operation characteristic.

11. (Canceled).

12. (Currently Amended) An automatic brake system for a vehicle comprising:

a forward-monitoring unit that automatically detects an obstacle preceding the vehicle, and a geometrical relationship among the vehicle, the obstacle and a path where the vehicle is traveling;

a control unit that varies ~~an assumed steering characteristic of the vehicle dependent on manual steering operation~~ an assumed characteristic of manual steering operation in accordance with a ~~the~~ condition of the path where the vehicle is traveling and executes an

automatic braking control operation to avoid a potential collision with the obstacle, based on the assumed manual steering operation characteristic and the geometrical relationship; and

a brake control unit that generates a braking force according to the automatic braking control operation determined by the control unit.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 12, wherein:

the control unit comprises a steering characteristic determining unit that determines the assumed manual steering operation characteristic, based on a degree of easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering.

15. (Currently Amended) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 14, wherein:

the steering characteristic determining unit determines the assumed manual steering operation characteristic in which a maximum steering angle is larger and a steering speed is faster, when the degree of easiness is higher; and

the steering characteristic determining unit determines the assumed manual steering operation characteristic in which a maximum steering angle is smaller and a steering speed is slower, when the degree of easiness is lower.

16. (Original) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 14, wherein:

the control unit further comprises a steering-based avoidance easiness determining unit that determines the degree of easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on widths of spaces on sides of the obstacle and a width of the vehicle.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Canceled).

19. (Currently Amended) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 12, wherein:

the control unit comprises:

a steering characteristic determining unit that determines the assumed manual steering operation characteristic;

a steering-based avoidance determining unit that determines a possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, passing on sides of the obstacle, based on the assumed manual steering operation characteristic determined by the steering characteristic determining unit; and

an automatic brake control determining unit that determines the automatic braking control operation to avoid the potential collision with the obstacle, based on the possibility determined by the steering-based avoidance determining unit.

20. (Currently Amended) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 12, wherein:

the control unit comprises:

a steering characteristic determining unit that determines the assumed manual steering operation characteristic;

a steering-based avoidance determining unit that determines a possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, passing on either one of left and right sides of the obstacle, based on the assumed manual steering operation characteristic determined by the steering characteristic determining unit;

a brake-based avoidance determining unit that determines a possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by braking, based on the geometrical relationship; and

an automatic brake control determining unit that determines the automatic braking control operation to avoid the potential collision with the obstacle, based on the possibility determined by the steering-based avoidance determining unit and the possibility determined by the brake-based avoidance determining unit.

21. (Original) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 20, wherein:

the automatic brake control determining unit determines to operate the braking force when the possibility determined by the steering-based avoidance determining unit and the possibility determined by the brake-based avoidance determining unit are both positive.

22. (Original) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 20, wherein:

the control unit further comprises an avoidance space width detecting unit that detects widths of spaces on the sides of the obstacle; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the widths of the spaces on the sides of the obstacle.

23. (Original) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 22, wherein:

the control unit further comprises a steering-based avoidance easiness determining unit that determines a degree of easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the widths of the spaces on the sides of the obstacle and a width of the vehicle; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the degree of easiness.

24. (Previously Presented) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 20, wherein:

the control unit further comprises a lateral displacement calculating unit that determines a lateral displacement required for a steering-based collision avoidance to each of the sides of the obstacle, based on the condition of the path where the vehicle is traveling detected by the forward-monitoring unit; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the lateral displacements determined by the lateral displacement calculating unit.

25. (Previously Presented) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 24, wherein:

the control unit further comprises:

an avoidance space width detecting unit that detects widths of spaces on the sides of the obstacle; and

a steering-based avoidance easiness determining unit that determines a degree of easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the widths of the spaces on the sides of the obstacle and a width of the vehicle;

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the degree of easiness with which the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering determined by the steering-based avoidance easiness determining unit; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the lateral displacements determined by the lateral displacement calculating unit, only when the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering determined by the steering-based avoidance determining unit is positive for both sides of the obstacle.

26. (Previously Presented) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 25, wherein:

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, only for a side of the obstacle where the lateral displacement determined by the lateral displacement calculating unit is smaller than on another side.

27. (Previously Presented) The automatic brake system as claimed in claim 20, wherein:

the control unit further comprises a lateral displacement calculating unit that determines a lateral displacement required for a steering-based collision avoidance to each side of the obstacle, based on the condition of the path where the vehicle is traveling detected by the forward-monitoring unit;

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines a required time for the lateral displacement, based on the condition of the path where the vehicle is traveling detected by the forward-monitoring unit; and

the steering-based avoidance determining unit determines the possibility that the vehicle can avoid the potential collision with the obstacle by steering, based on the required time for the lateral displacement, a longitudinal distance between the vehicle and the obstacle, and a relative speed of the vehicle to the obstacle.

28. (Canceled).

29. (Canceled).